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UNECE-FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire

Report to the European Forestry Commission Meeting, Zvolen, May 2006

Between October 2004 and March 2006 the ECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Fire concentrated its work on the follow-up of the UNECE/FAO Conference on "Forest Fire Management and International Cooperation in Fire Emergencies in the Eastern Mediterranean, Balkans and adjoining Regions of the Near East and Central Asia" (Antalya, Turkey, 30 March - 3 April 2004) and the consolidation of the UNISDR Regional Wildland Fire Networks that are being built in the ECE region (Baltic, Southeast Europe, Mediterranean, Central Asia). Reference is made to the EFC paper "Cooperation and networking on forest fires, with a focus on the Balkan and Mediterranean areas". Most importantly was the regional consultation in Macedonia FYR in 2005 where members of the Balkan Network decided to invite neighbouring countries and to expand its area of joint activities to Southeast Europe. The consultation was followed by the first regional wildland fire exercise "Eastern European, Near East and Central Asian States Exercise on Wildland Fire Information and Resources Exchange - EASTEX FIRE 2005" which was a direct follow-up of the Antalya conference. The coordinator of the team continued to produce UNECE-FAO International Forest Fire News (IFFN). The last two issues that have been printed and distributed focus on "Prescribed Burning in Northwest Europe and the Baltic Region" (IFFN No. 30) and the UNISDR Global Wildland Fire Network (IFFN No. 31). The next issues to be printed soon include a special issue on the Russian Federation (No.32) and Southern Europe / Mediterranean (No. 33). The team participated in the sessions of COFO-17 and the Ministerial Meeting on Forests (March 2005) and is currently working for the FAO to implement the recommendations of these meetings, i.e., the development of a Fire Management Code and a Strategy for Enhancing International Cooperation in Wildland Fire Management. The team is supporting the FAO Expert Consultation on Wildland Fire (Madrid, Spain, 10-12 May 2006). At the EFC meeting the team will present a proposal for the development of a "Regional Strategy for Cooperation in Wildland Fire Management in Southeast Europe".